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LETTER DATED 9 MAY 1992 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you the Russian translation of the statement by the President of the Azerbaijan Republic, Mr. Yakub Mamedov, in connection with the grave situation in Nagorny-Karabakh as a consequence of the intensifying attacks of Armenian forces. These attacks have resulted in the occupation and destruction of the city of Shusha with heavy loss of life. This massive offensive, supported by the air force and tanks, is a flagrant violation of Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity and a most serious threat to peace.

I am bringing this very grave situation to the urgent attention of the Security Council.

I shall appreciate it if you could kindly have this letter and the President's statement circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hassan A. HASSANOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement by Mr. Y. Mamedov, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijani Republic

The Armenian militarists have undertaken a new barbarian action. Today, in the pre-dawn hours, the city of Shusha was subjected to a concentrated bombing attack. Heavy artillery, rockets and the Grad rocket launcher were used. Houses and other buildings were destroyed, and people were killed and wounded. Immediately after the relentless bombardment, which lasted for many hours, the city was attacked from three sides. Backed by tanks and armoured vehicles, a sizeable armed force advanced on Shusha. Before the start of the large-scale operation, Armenian armed units cut off the only road linking Shusha with the rest of Azerbaijan. The attacks lasted for the whole day. The city's defenders are successfully containing the enemy's onslaught.

We received information about this provocative incident soon after the tripartite meeting at Tehran, in which the peoples of Azerbaijan and the whole region placed their hopes. And, I must say, such hopes were not unfounded. The course of the negotiations at Tehran demonstrated that, in spite of the differing approaches to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict and to the great number of mutual claims, there is common agreement that the bloodshed must be stopped.

Now, when the streets of the ancient centre of Azerbaijani culture are again steeped in the blood of innocent people, the outcome of that important meeting, whose purpose was to normalize the situation in the region, has been seriously jeopardized. The separatists' new venture nullifies the peace-keeping efforts of the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, other international organizations and a number of heads of State that are seeking to normalize the situation in Karabakh and on the Azerbaijani-Armenian frontier. The world is aware that Shusha is a sacred place for the Azerbaijani people and is the centre of its spiritual and cultural life. The attack on this sacred place grieves the heart of every Azerbaijani. The destruction or the perfidious capture of the city will, inevitably, elicit an appropriate response, and the battle for Shusha may develop into a large-scale conflict. Need I mention the dangers inherent in such a turn of events?

The matter is clear: a band of separatists and ardent nationalists from Khankendi and their protectors - and not only from Armenia - is playing with the fates of peoples, continuing to rely on force and to fan the flames of hatred and war.

I appeal to all those who have declared their humane intentions to settle the bloody confrontation, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Presidents of the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and other States of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the entire international community, to restrain the aggressor. Only

common efforts can prevent an escalation of the violence and a new tragedy in long-suffering Azerbaijan, a tragedy whose dimensions may exceed the horrors of Khojaly, which shocked the entire world.

The Azerbaijani people believes that reason, humanism and justice will triumph. Its voice must be heard.